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THE LOTTERY TICKET.—KUNZ.

A CHRISTMAS IDYL.

OH, the winter winds blew chilly through the long and dreary night,
But the Christmas bells rang gayly in the gray, dim morning light.
In the moonlight cold and sparkling gleamed the white and drifted snow,
But the morning sunlight blended with the hearth-fire's cheery glow.

Chime, chime; merrily chime,
Bells of the holy Christmas time;
Wake with your music the echoes that sleep
Where the gray mountains their solemn watch keep;
Ring out your gladness o'er hillside and main;
Ring till the New Year bells echo the strain;
Toll for the Old Year's record of wrong,
Wail for its losses in agonized song;
Chant a glad pæan for victories won,
And an anthem of hope for the days that will come.

Flash, ruddy fires, in your roseate light,
Weave us fair pictures of memories bright;
Golden and warm let the embers burn,
As the pages of Memory's tablets we turn.

Some of the pages are blotted with sin,
Wrong has been wrought since the Old Year came in,
Evil been done since the last Christmas-time,
Hands then unspotted are crimsoned with crime,
Hearts have grown colder to truth and to love—
Bartered for trifles their birthright above.

Tear-sprinkled pages, that whisper of loss—
Of wearing the thorn-crown, and bearing the cross—
Pages o'er which bitter tears have been wept;
Pages on which the glad sunshine has slept—
Pages so precious, the wealth of the seas
Never would tempt us to parting with these.

Deck the walls with green and holly!
Heap still more the Christmas fires!
Build your castles in the embers,
Glowing turrets, flaming spires!

Bring the gifts of love and friendship,
True heart-tokens let them be,
One and all, with joyous faces,
Gather round our Christmas tree.

'Tis the birthday of the Christ-child,
For his sake we keep our feast,
They that seek shall surely find him,
Lo! his star is in the East!—*Alice M. Guernsey.*

THE LOTTERY TICKET.

How impossible it is to explain the fascination, the irresistible charm of that piece of paper covered with big figures! If that particular number should be the lucky one! "If" is a strange word. A sad one when we look backward over lost opportunities; but full of hope as we cast a glance forward into the unrevealed future and behold its possibilities. And nothing presents such direct possibility of large returns for small investments as the lottery. To be sure, the chance for a big prize is only one in thirty thousand, more or less, as the case may be; but still there is a chance, and the ways of the ticket-seller are so seductive that the poor wretch of a purchaser is actually made to believe that his must be the lucky number. It is the same number which won in the last great drawing, and therefore must be a special favorite of Dame Fortune; or else it did not draw the last time, and consequently will succeed now, as, according to popular belief, everything has its turn, sooner or later. And so, with such fair words the ticket man works upon the imagination of the victim, and the bargain is finished.

In some countries the lottery is carried to such excess as to be really a national misfortune. In Havana, for example, where it is carried on by the government itself, it produces a vast amount of suffering

among the poorer classes, whose ignorance leads them to superstition and credulity. Every one who has visited this Cuban city is familiar with the lottery-ticket vender. He meets you at every turn. He is on the wharf to welcome you; he follows you through the streets; at the theatre; the railway station; at the very door of your house, there he is lying in wait for you, his harsh nasal cry sounding demoniac promises in your ears. If you are rich, you will thrust your hand in your pocket and buy, to get free from his persistent attention, possibly to be made richer for your pains, but probably to regret the foolish waste of your money. But it is to the ears of the poor and wretched that this constantly repeated cry of Dame Fortune is sweet and alluring. Many and many a poor family deprive themselves for weeks of the very necessities of life, in order that they may save money to buy at least a piece of a chance for riches. When the coveted piece of paper is in their possession, they wait with breathless anxiety for the decisive moment. Much time is wasted in prayers to some wretched plaster image or hideous colored engraving of a favorite saint, and endless castles in the air erected, to fall with dreadful crash when the lists are announced and that particular number is left out. But even defeat does not discourage these eager seekers after unearned fortune. They go on starving themselves to get money. They throw the saint who did not help them out of the window and buy a new one, and so keep up an endless round of hope and disappointment, only in rare instances winning a few dollars, which, instead of satisfying, have the effect to drive them to more rash investments.

In Germany, too, the lottery has a powerful influence upon the common people. A capital illustration of this passion is given us from the pencil of a German artist, a true character painting, in which